

HELICON WEST & The USU Writing Center Present

My Creed

by Dan Nyikos

I used to be like you. Sitting at home, drinking my name-brand soda with my TV dinner, watching the news. I used to slurp goopy mashed potatoes while watching politicians bang their podiums while telling me what to fear. Economic recession. Ethnic tension. Foreign market competition. Razors in the Halloween concessions. I ate it all up.

Then something snapped. I had seen it too many times: The old man put on trial for things that he did before his judge was alive. The family hiding in a cave too scared to pray while the soldiers roll by. The mother holding her child with the bombs coming down.

So I put on a suit. Invented a name. Punched out some cops. Derailed a freight train. I admit I get a thrill from going through it unhurt, my name on TV, my face in a crowd on a child's shirt. I tell you what to fear.

Now you come after me. Drop bombs on my lair. Punch me through walls held by my hair in prime time live. Throw me in jail. Shoot me. Stab me. Drop a building on me and say no one could survive.

I can take it.

For the Birds

by: Kayla Jean Anderson

Two days in

lost in the Olympic Peninsula
our clothes stiff with yesterday's sweat
on a Herring Gull filled shore
we watched the Pacific.

The surf,
pushing away from an orange sky,
smoothed the shoreline between us.

Wordlessly, he fingered my hair.
pulling the curls,
wrapping them in coils
of brown and wrinkled-white.

Nervous about moving,
I focused on the small fraction
of his shoulder
pressed against mine, when
suddenly
tired of stillness, and
with nothing to ground him,
he breathed, *watch this*
and ran.

toward the heaving blue, causing panic
among the birds
who had taken the silence
as a sign
of safety.